



## horse fly

representative species

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Arthropoda
Class:	Insecta
Order:	Diptera
Family:	Tabanidae

## Features

Horse flies undergo complete metamorphosis (egg, larva, pupae, adult). Their stout, large body may be gray or black. They have one pair of membranous (thin, pliable) wings. The hind wings are small, knobbed structures. Sucking mouthparts allow for the ingestion of liquid foods. Larvae may be up to one inch long.

## Natural History

Horse fly larvae, called maggots, are aquatic or semiaquatic, pupating in moist soil. Adults often are found close to where the larvae develop but may fly several miles away. The female horse fly sucks blood while the male drinks plant juices. Eggs are laid on vegetation above the water. Newly hatched larvae drop into the water and feed on invertebrates. Larvae overwinter and pupate during the following summer.

## Habitats

Mississippi River; Missouri River; interior rivers and streams; natural lakes and prairie marshes; wet prairies and fens; bottomland forests; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs

## Iowa Status

common; native

## Iowa Range

statewide

## Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.  
*Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats* CD-ROM.